

# International

# Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 7

July 2007

## Contents

**1**      **Message from the Mayor**  
**Message from the Council Member**

**2**      **Highlights of Upcoming Events**

**3**      **Mayor's International Affairs & Development Council**  
**Global Bridge — Asian American Business Council**

**4**      **Meet the Consular Corps in Houston**

**5**      **Connections Across the Globe:**  
**Houston Airport System**  
**Port of Houston Authority**

**6**      **Promoting Houston Globally:**  
**Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau**  
**Opportunities and Resources**

**7-8**      **Upcoming Event Calendar (detailed)**

## Message from the Mayor

During the City's visit to China last year, we were fortunate enough to visit an outstanding summer camp designed to teach English to Chinese students and to promote mutual understanding between our two cultures. Founded by the Houston-based Chia-Siou Educational Foundation(CSEF), this year's camp has expanded from last year's number of 60 to the current 130 Chinese students. Six Houston teenage volunteers will return to teach in China this summer and Continental Airlines has provided airfare for all of these volunteers.



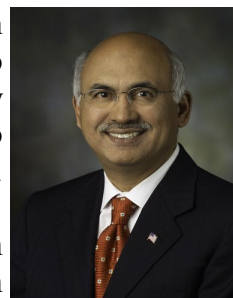
*Bill White*

I am proud of the CSEF's mission and success at building relationships and understanding between the youth in America and China. We look forward to supporting further examples of leadership in the arena of educational exchange!

**Bill White, Mayor**

## Message from the Chairman, International Liaison and Protocol Committee (ILPC), City Council

One of the great benefits of living and working in Houston is the opportunity our citizens have to benefit from our globalized marketplace. Every day, businessmen from around the world come to Houston searching out opportunities for trade.



*M.J. Khan*

Recently, we organized a welcoming reception here at City Hall for a Pakistani trade delegation led by the Executive Director of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan. Mayor Bill White led the welcome for these delegates, joined by the Consulate General of Pakistan, the Honorable G.R. Baluch, several members of the local Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and members of the Mayor's International Affairs & Development Council/ South Asia. The meeting with the trade delegation is a great example of how local and international communities can work together successfully to create an open dialogue, which hopefully will lead to new business opportunities that benefit everyone.

**M. J. Khan, Council Member**

# Highlights of Upcoming Events

## Pakistani American Community Center

July 5—Join the Pakistan Association of Greater Houston the Pakistan Center Trust Team, the honorable Mohammedmian Soomro, Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, as well as other invited guests for the Grand Inauguration of the Pakistani American Community Center. For more information, please call (713) 478-1637.

## Annual Ascot Day

July 8—The British American Business Chamber (BABC) is sponsoring the annual Ascot Day at the Sam Houston Race Park with proceeds benefiting the British American Foundation of Texas. Networking opportunities abound at this outdoor event. For more information, contact [www.babchouston.org](http://www.babchouston.org)

## Luncheon with the Ambassador

July 11—The Greater Houston Partnership will host a luncheon with distinguished guest, His Excellency Bernardo Alvarez, the Ambassador of Venezuela to the United States. The luncheon will be held at the Westin Oaks in the Consort Ballroom. For more information, please email [mvelasquez@houston.org](mailto:mvelasquez@houston.org).

## Asian Chamber Luncheon

July 11—J. Edward Lee, the chief operating officer of ImaginAsian Entertainment in New York, will speak on the communication and entertainment fields at the monthly luncheon of the Asian Chamber of Commerce to be held at the Westin Galleria hotel. For more information, contact the Chamber office at 713-782-7222.

## Bastille Day Celebration

July 14—Celebrate Bastille Day with the French American Chamber of Commerce, at an evening event held at the J.P. Morgan Chase building at 6:00 PM. This event will feature French food, entertainment and cultural exhibits in honor of the French national holiday. For more information, please visit [www.facchouston.org](http://www.facchouston.org).

## Quarterly Meeting of the GHP

July 16—The Greater Houston Partnership's quarterly meeting will feature Roger Dow, president and CEO of the Travel Industry Association.(TIA). Mr. Dow will speak on the power of travel to energize companies and create opportunities. For more information on this luncheon to be held at Hyatt Regency, contact Jill Reese at 713-844-3682.

## Emerging Technology Workshop

July 17—Join a workshop sponsored by the Gulf Coast Regional Center of Innovation and Commercialization to learn more about applying for funding by the Texas Emerging Technology Fund. This afternoon workshop will be held at the Houston Technology Center. For more information, contact [www.gulfcoastrcic.org](http://www.gulfcoastrcic.org).

## Houston Minority Business Council

July 18—Join Craig Clayton, founder and executive director of the Global Center for Diversity and the Houston Minority Business Council for a luncheon at the J.W. Marriott Hotel. Mr. Clayton will speak on supplier diversity programs and how organizations are generating revenue with these programs. For more information, please visit [www.hmbc.org](http://www.hmbc.org).

## Tianjin Delegation

Late July—The City of Houston will welcome a trade delegation from the Tianjin Economic-technological Development Area, Tianjin, China. The delegates representing China's fourth largest city will visit various industrial and technological parks in the city. For more information, please call (713) 247-1453.

## Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council (MIADC)

*Each month we bring you the latest updates on the developments of the seven MIADC regions: Africa, Americas, Asia-Australia, Canada, Europe, Middle East/ North Africa & South Asia*

### **South Asia**

On June 26, the MIADC/ South Asia joined Mayor Bill White, Council Member M.J. Khan, Consul General Baluch of Pakistan and the Pakistan Chamber of Commerce in welcoming an eleven-member trade delegation from Pakistan.

The occasion, which marked the first time any government-sponsored trade delegation from Pakistan had visited Houston, gave MIADC members an opportunity to meet with business leaders from all over Pakistan, and discuss ways to promote trade in a mutually beneficial manner.

### **Africa**

On June 28, members of the MIADC/ Africa met for their second quarterly meeting to discuss their plan of action for the coming year.

MIADC/ Africa formed an ad hoc committee, whose purpose is to propose a project for MIADC/ Africa to focus on within one month. The members are as follows:

- Dr. Steve Ams, committee chair
- Dr. Muyi Arowosafe
- Mr. Kenneth Bolton
- Ms. Nomsa Cele
- Mr. Eghosa Edebor
- Ms. Kimberly Nichols
- Ms. Lindi Yeni

## The Global Bridge: The Asian American Business Council (AABC)

*Each month, the International Newsletter features "the Global Bridge" section, which introduces local business organizations dedicated to promoting Houston's international image.*



Kenneth Li

Houston's Chinatown is a bustling metropolis along the Bellaire Blvd. Business corridor which contains approximately 900 acres serving 300,000 plus Chinese-Americans as a cultural, religious, business and financial center.

Over the last 25 years, this area has grown immensely. In 1983, Diho Asian market opened at 9280 Bellaire Blvd; and Chinese-American businesses then began migrating to the area from Old Chinatown, located west of downtown Houston.

Promoting the interests of this dynamic area is the Asian American Business Council (AABC), a non-profit community organization with

sub-committees such as beautification, marketing, safety and membership. AABC Chairman Kenneth Li says, "Houston's Chinatown is remarkable! There are nine banks around the intersection of Bellaire Blvd. and Corporate Dr., the highest density of banks in Houston, with total assets of over \$20,000,000,000. By 2009, there will be over 2,000,000 square feet of new construction being completed; and currently there are over 2,000 Chinese-American owned businesses in the area, including 400 retail stores and at least 150 Asian restaurants."

To increase the public awareness of Southwest Chinatown and to create a new tourist destination, the AABC is holding a design competition (deadline August 31) to create a landmark monument. One of the major goals of the competition is to create a new

landmark that will better define the entrance to the new Southwest Chinatown. Students, architects and artists are encouraged to send their design ideas to [eita@edwardsaoarchitects.com](mailto:eita@edwardsaoarchitects.com).

There are currently four Chinese/Taiwanese community centers of 100,000 plus square feet, eight major temples or churches, over 15 Chinese newspapers and three Chinese radio stations that serve this community. According to Li, "The AABC wants to establish a monument which will enhance the quality of life and improve the pedestrian experience in this area. Our monument would generate public awareness which in turn will attract more businesses and customers to this area."

—Mary Jane Wakefield



# THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

*This month we visit the epic deserts of the Rub-al-Khali to the Kingdom of the Saudi Arabia, a land of long history, hallowed traditions and, now, sweeping changes. We discuss with the Saudi Consulate General to Houston his perspective on the strong relationship between Saudi Arabia and Houston.*



Consul General  
Abdulrahman Alshaya

Houston and Saudi Arabia have a relationship that dates back to 1933 when a consortium of four major oil companies, including Standard Oil and Humble Oil (a forerunner of Exxon), began exploring for oil. These efforts bore fruit and, in 1938, and the now famous Dammam Well # 7 was discovered in Saudi Arabia.

To help further develop this longstanding relationship, the Saudi Arabian government selected Dr. Abdulrahman Alshaya for the post of Consul General in Houston. An individual with global experience, Dr. Alshaya joined the Consulate office in Houston in December 2006.

His appointment by no means meant his first exposure to life in the United States; Dr. Alshaya earned in Business Administration and Economics from Humboldt University in California and a M.A. degree in Public Administration from Sonoma University.

Dr. Alshaya then joined his country's foreign service, and became Deputy Director of the Press and Media Section of the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington D.C. While working at the Embassy in Washington, he earned an M.A. Degree in Political Science and a Ph.D. Degree in International Affairs from Catholic University in Washington, D.C. After residing in the United States for 11 years, Dr. Alshaya departed for Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1996 to become special assistant to the Saudi Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Adding to his already extensive international background, Dr. Alshaya became director of Saudi Arabia's economic research division in London, England, for four years. He later became Deputy Chief of Mission at the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Tokyo, Japan, for four additional years. Prior to joining the Houston Consulate Office, he

was Director of Diplomatic Flight Clearance Permits in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Riyadh. Dr. Alshaya was also a member of the official delegation that negotiated Saudi Arabia's membership into the World Trade Organization.

A major goal of the Consulate Office is to expand foreign investment in Saudi Arabia and to host delegations from Saudi Arabia who wish to conduct business here. "Houston is a primary trading partner of Saudi Arabia—our shipping companies utilize your port extensively. Saudi Aramco and Sabic, two of our largest petrochemical firms, have field offices here. There truly is a sizeable Saudi Arabian community here." says Dr. Alshaya.

An especially innovative and new program has recently been initiated by Dr. Alshaya. The Consul General has begun an outreach program in the community where he will offer lectures to civic organizations and schools about the cultural aspects of Saudi Arabia from its people to its economic development. "It is important to offer these communicative outreach programs because the media does not always offer the most accurate knowledge and sometimes presents their information in a stereotypical fashion," says Dr. Alshaya.

The father of three young children, Dr. Alshaya and his wife keep busy with all of their family activities and in his spare time, he reads, walks and plays tennis. A native of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Dr. Alshaya and his family try to visit their country at least once a year.

—Mary Jane Wakefield

## Did You Know?

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is estimated to have 24% of the world's proven total petroleum resources, or about 260.1 billion barrels.

Source: [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

# Connections Across the Globe:

*This month we track developments taking place within the Houston Airport System and the Port of Houston Authority*

## Houston Airport System (HAS)

If international air carriers obtain their desires, Open Skies agreements, like the two recently signed between the United States and China, and the United States and the European Union, would deregulate the aviation industry and open it up to free competition among private companies.

Currently, airlines must seek the authorization of their respective governing bodies to fly into new international territories. Often, they have to compete with one another for new routes. In the U.S., for example, the Department of Transportation reviews submitted applications from competing airlines and grants a specific route to only one of the applicants.

Last month, U.S. Secretary of

Transportation Mary Peters and Chinese Minister of Civil Aviation Yang Yuanyuan announced the signing of a new U.S.-China Open Skies agreement. Representatives of Continental Airlines said the agreement would create economic opportunities across the United States and it would provide consumers with significantly greater choices for their US-China travel needs.

Under the new agreement, the number of daily passenger flights between the US and China will more than double by 2012, from 10 daily flights to 23. Carriers in Asia would also like to increase their service to IAH.

China Airlines and Korean Air Cargo, which recently launched service to Houston, will soon be

joined by another Asian cargo carrier --- Jade Cargo, which will begin this month twice weekly all-cargo flights between Houston and Shenzhen.

While both the Open Skies agreements and the U.S.-China pact will undoubtedly increase international passenger traffic and possibly even reduce the cost to consumers, carriers continue to push for more liberal access into new markets. One such initiative is the push to develop an open North American Aviation market that would include the skies over the United States, Canada and Mexico.

— By Juan M. Alanis, HAS

---

## Port of Houston Authority (PHA)

By unanimous vote, Houston City Council has reappointed Kase Lawal to the Port Commission of the Port of Houston Authority (PHA) for a fifth term. Initially appointed in June 1999, Lawal was the first vice chairman of the Port Commission.

We welcome Commissioner Lawal's return," said PHA Chairman Jim Edmonds. "He is a valued member of the Commission and a well-respected leader in the business community and a supporter of education and small business development. We look forward to continuing our work with Commissioner Lawal."

PHA's Small Business Development Task Force, a member of the PHA Pension Committee and a member of the International Business Development Task Force.

"I can think of very few things as necessary to ensuring robust international commerce as a seaport," Lawal said. "I am grateful for the confidence the City Council has demonstrated in me with this reappointment. I have enjoyed immensely the past eight years on the Port Commission and look forward to helping meet the challenges ahead."

Houston Mayor Bill White remarked, "Kase Lawal

understands the importance of the Port as an asset in building business opportunities and he has a proven track record in working hard to promote Houston around the world. We certainly want to keep his energy and talents on the Port Commission."

City Council Member Carol Alvarado, whose district includes the Port, said "The Port of Houston is a vital part of the Houston economy and Kase Lawal has proven to be an outstanding businessman and Port Commissioner."

—Edwin Henry, PHA

Lawal is chairman of

[www.houstontx.gov/moiad](http://www.houstontx.gov/moiad)

# Promoting Houston Globally:

*This month we track developments taking place in the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau (GHCVB)*

Houston, which is considered the energy capital of the world, has strong multilateral relations with oil and gas producing countries in Latin America. Oil and gas executives from Rio de Janeiro and Macae' represent a sizeable percentage of business travelers to Houston, benefiting from Continental Airlines' daily non-stop flight.

The Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau (GHCVB) targets Brazilian business travelers by offering them leisure opportunities for the weekend preceding or following their business activities, and by encouraging them to extend their stay by bringing along their families. Highlighting these amenities, the GHCVB, the Houston Airport System and Houston-area hotels recently made presentations at the Tourism Exhibition and Brazilian Travel

Agent Congress that were largely attended.

Additionally, in June 2007, the GHCVB has initiated its first sales mission to Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. The mission also included representatives from four GHCVB member hotels, the Omni Houston Hotel, Westin Oaks/ Galleria, Crowne Plaza Houston West and Hilton Medical Center. GHCVB representatives met with diverse corporations such as Dow Chemical, Pfizer, Duke Energy, GI Petrobras, Schlumberger, British Gas and El Paso Energy to market Houston as a convention and meeting destination. GHCVB representatives held business meetings with top producing tour operators and incentive houses such as Carlson Wagonlit Incentive, AMEX Incentive Groups and BTI Incentive Groups. The prospects for future tourism from Brazil look very bright.

— By Daniel Palomo, GHCVB

**International Newsletter  
is published monthly by the**

**Mayor's Office of  
International Affairs  
&  
Development  
City of Houston**

**Bill White  
Mayor**

**Helen T. Chang  
Director, MOIAD**

**Matthew Shailer  
Editor**

**Mary Jane Wakefield  
Assistant Editor**

## Opportunities & Resources

### Exchange Program

- Future Leaders Exchange Program (host families needed)  
Contact: David Godwin at [dgodwin977@aol.com](mailto:dgodwin977@aol.com)

### Awards

- Leadership Texas, 2007 Cathy Bonner Leadership Award  
Contact: [www.womensresources.org](http://www.womensresources.org)

### Design Competition

- Asian American Business Council China Town Monument  
Contact: [eita@edwardsarchitects.com](mailto:eita@edwardsarchitects.com)

Please send articles/  
comments to  
[helen.chang@cityofhouston.net](mailto:helen.chang@cityofhouston.net)  
Fax: (713) 437-6358

901 Bagby  
City Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002  
(713) 247-3397

**Next Submission Deadline:  
July 20, 2007**

## July 2007

Date	Time	Event	Venue	Contact
7/5	5:00 PM	Greater Houston Partnership: Reception for Pakistani Senate Chairman	The St. Regis Hotel	mvelasquez@houston.org
7/5	7:30 PM	Pakistan Association of Greater Houston & Pakistan Center Trust Team: Grand Inauguration of Pakistani American Community Center	Pakistani American Community Center	(713) 478-1637
7/8	1:00 PM	British American Business Council Royal Ascot	Sam Houston Race Park	www.babchouston.org
7/9	6:30 PM	Italy America Chamber of Commerce: Battle of the Bottles	Chez Georges	www.iacctexas.com
7/10	—	City of Houston: Delegation from the Tianjin Economic-Technological Development Area (through July 20)	—	(713) 247-1453
7/11	11:30 AM	Asian Chamber of Commerce: July Monthly Luncheon	Westin Galleria Hotel	(713)-782-7222
7/11	11:30 AM	Greater Houston Partnership: Luncheon featuring Venezuela's Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Bernardo Alvarez	The Westin Oaks Hotel	mvelasquez@houston.org
7/13	—	University of Houston, Graduate College of Social Work Travel Study Course—Hong Kong & Mainland China	TBD	(713) 743-8071
7/14	6:00 PM	French American Chamber of Commerce—Houston Branch: Bastille Day Celebration	JP Morgan Chase Building	www.facchouston.org
7/16	11:30 AM	Greater Houston Partnership: July 2007 Quarterly Meeting	Hyatt Regency Houston	(713)-844-0228
7/17	11:30 AM	Greater Houston Partnership: Cold Call Workshop 2	Greater Houston Partnership	pthomas@houston.org
7/17	2:00 PM	Gulf Coast RCIC: Applicant Workshop	Houston Technology Center	www.gulfcoastrcic.org
7/18	8:00 AM	Houston Minority Business Council: Networking Luncheon—Accessing Diverse Suppliers with Capacity	J.W. Marriott—Exhibition Center	www.hmbc.org
7/18	5:30 PM	British American Business Council: BABC Bonding and Networking Event	Ron's Pub	www.babchouston.org
7/19	11:00 AM	Houston Public Library: Library's World Language collection, check presentation	Julia Ideson Building	(832) 393-1382
7/19	11:30 AM	Greater Houston Partnership: Green Building Luncheon Part 1—New Commercial Buildings	Hilton Americas	tcesta@houston.org
7/20	—	City of Houston: 2007 Business Development Mission to the Russian Federation and the Netherlands (through July 27)	—	(713) 247-3397



7/26	8:00 AM	Greater Houston Partnership: International Connection—Poland	Greater Houston Partnership	nharper@houston.org
	11:30 AM	Houston Dynamo and Houston East End Chamber of Commerce: Soccer Stars Luncheon	University of Houston Hilton Hotel	rebecca@eecoc.org
7/27	8:30 AM	Harris County Job Fair	Bear Creek Community Center	(281)-859-1566

## Special Announcement

The City of Houston and The Greater Houston Partnership are pleased to announce the upcoming "Summer Davos," hosted by the World Economic Forum in Dalian, China, September 6-8, 2007.

This world-class business forum, created in close partnership with the government of the People's Republic of China, will include an exhibition, "Community of New Champions," which will highlight cities and regions around the world. Houston is the only American city selected for this special recognition. The event will bring a group of 300 CEOs from global growth companies together with the Forum's existing members to network, cooperate and exchange ideas.

If you are interested in participating in this historic opportunity, please contact Helen T. Chang, Mayor's Office, at (713) 247-1453 or Miguel San Juan, Greater Houston Partnership, at (713) 844-3607.



*We have one simple goal: to promote Houston as a renowned international city.*

The contents are intended for general information purposes only.